



The City Of San Diego

**Councilmember Jim Madaffer**

*City Council District 7*



## Happy New Year!

I hope that you and your family enjoyed the holidays. Now that most of us have settled into a New Year, I thought I'd share some items I've been saving since my last eNewsletter as part of a year in review.

I also hope that you have enjoyed receiving these electronic newsletters and that they keep you updated on issues and events on the horizon. This issue, however, is slightly different. As 2003 came to a close it was a perfect time for us to reflect back on the year in review. I wanted to share with you some of the highlights.

But before we get started with a review of last year, I wanted to quickly provide you an update on the weekly trash collection and recycling calendars normally sent out each November to all of the City's 270,000 curbside recycling customers. This year they have been delayed to accommodate improvements to the collection system which will cause schedule changes later this spring. The City is anticipating that these changes will be implemented in May, 2004. By mailing one calendar in April rather than a four-month calendar in November followed by a second eight-month calendar in April, the City will save approximately \$100,000 in mailing costs.

In the meantime, residents should continue using the same days of collection and may find their weekly collection days and a printable collection schedule calendar online by clicking here on the [Environmental Service Department's \(ESD\) Web site](#).

By simply typing in an address and zip code, residents will have access to their trash, recycling, and greenery collection pickup days. For residents who do not have internet access and would like a calendar mailed to their residence may

contact ESD's customer service at (858) 694-7000. Customer Service will also e-mail calendars upon request.

**And now, our year in review . . .**

## **Fires**



Of course the fires dominated the last quarter of 2003. There was tragedy to be sure. And it resulted in changes large and small. I have been focusing on updating City ordinances relating to construction standards and brush management. It is important that we both rebuild burned homes and require new construction to use the safest materials available, especially in fire prone areas. Further, it is important that brush management policies be consistent, easy to understand, and adequately protect citizens and their property. We're also addressing the issue of erosion by providing free erosion control materials and brochures. On Tuesday we adopted new standards for roofs in the City ([click here for a news story](#)) and next week we will tackle the issue of brush management and the defensible space behind our homes and property. [You can view my FireStorm 2003 photo archive by clicking on this link.](#)

## **Traffic**



Traffic is of concern to everyone. While the problem is a regional issue, we've taken some steps to help in our district. The opening of the Alvarado Canyon Road Bridge considerably helps traffic flow by providing 8,000 drivers daily in the Navajo area with an alternative to using I-8.

A new pedestrian bridge across College Avenue at San Diego State University has made a tremendous improvement in traffic since being completed this fall. We've installed stop signs, increased the use of radar officers, provided a portable radar trailer that displays vehicle speeds for neighborhoods to use and, in some areas, decreased the speed limit. We also brought back the popular "Slow Down....It's our Neighborhood" public awareness campaign. You may remember it from five years ago when I launched it in District 7. Now you see Slow Down signs throughout the City as a reminder to drivers that the speed limit is 25 mph on residential streets.



## **Focusing on Youth**



We've focused on youth this past year and it is wonderful to provide more opportunities available to them. For instance, we completed the first-rate comfort station at Lake Murray Community Park. The distinctive new building has public restrooms, a snack bar and storage areas used primarily

by youth sports teams. We have completely remodeled the tot lots, also called play areas, by replacing old, outdated equipment with colorful contemporary play structures. There are new tot lots (playground play areas) at Princess Del Cerro Park, Road Runner Park, Tierrasanta Community Park and Colina Del Sol Park.



We're working with the San Diego Unified School District to build new sports fields. Previously young athletes had no option but to play ball on decades old fields made of unsafe materials such as decomposed granite. Now, there are grass ball fields at Hearst Elementary School in Del Cerro. Next up will be



Pershing Middle School (ground breaking is February 11) in San Carlos, Lewis Middle School in Allied Gardens (under construction now), Kumeyaay (under construction now) and Vista Grande Elementary Schools in Tierrasanta. We are working with parents and

administrators at a number of other area schools to help in creating even more youth sports playing areas. Just last night I met with the leaders of all the major youth sports organizations for the Navajo area as we continue our efforts to build more quality youths sports facilities for our community.



We want to keep our teens and young adults safe. It is with them in mind that we created the Illegal Street Racing Ordinance in order to crack down on illegal street racing. We also created and passed a vehicle forfeiture ordinance as well. We virtually eliminated the problem of Illegal Street Racing in the City of San Diego by toughening the penalties and by making it a crime to be a spectator.

Other cities have followed our efforts and San Diego's lead.



San Diego is also leading the way with the City's Neighborhood eWatch web site. Are you on the eWatch email list? I'm very proud of the Neighborhood eWatch program I introduced to City residents last May. Using available technology, we created this free public service as an additional

tool in our efforts to fight crime and to be aware of what's going on around us. You can input your address or that of a family member or friend and each day subscribers are notified electronically if a crime has taken place in that specified area over the past 24 hours. [You may visit the web site by clicking on eWatch.SanDiego.gov](http://eWatch.SanDiego.gov) - and tell your friends about it too! And again the cost: it's a free service!

## Neighborhood Improvements

Neighborhoods in District 7 got a real boost this year when we completed a number of landscaping and beautification projects. We installed beautiful new medians on College Avenue between 1-8 and Camino Rico, on College Avenue from MLK Freeway to El Cajon Boulevard, on Montezuma Road from College



Avenue to Fairmount Avenue, on Navajo Road from Park Ridge Boulevard to Jackson Drive, on Navajo Road from Jackson Drive to Bisbee Lake Avenue and on Del Cerro Boulevard from College Avenue to Madra Avenue.



We helped to remodel the Tierrasanta Boulevard and Santo Road intersection in front of Serra High School with a marquee and landscaping. This year we installed new sidewalks on the north side of Navajo Road from Cowles Mountain Boulevard to Bisbee Lake Avenue and also on the east side of College Avenue from I-8 to Del Cerro Boulevard. We are soon to start a contract to

install new landscaping on the right-of-way area between the sidewalk and the less than attractive fences along Navajo Road between Cowles Mountain and Boulder Lake. We also installed new community signs in Allied Gardens and Del Cerro and later this year we will install a new signs in the San Carlos and the College areas as well.

Since the opening of the Salvation Army Kroc Community Center on University Avenue we've seen a wonderful transformation of the area surrounding it. Empty storefronts have been replaced with thriving businesses and the entire area is sprucing up. And sadly we saw the passing of Joan Kroc, one of the City's most generous philanthropists, in October. But the incredible legacy of the Kroc family generosity will live on with the announcement this week





of a \$1.5 billion (yes billion) donation to the Salvation Army to build 30-35 more centers around the country like the model center built in our Council District.

Major transformations are taking place thanks to our redevelopment projects last year. The College Area Redevelopment Plan is bringing sweeping changes to the SDSU area. The new Trolley station and Aztec Walk are moving along very nicely, getting ready for new restaurants, shops and theaters. The Crossroads Redevelopment Plan was also approved and finalized last year and will bring similar changes to major streets such as El Cajon Boulevard and University Avenue. The results will bring new economic opportunities and attractive new facilities, housing, businesses and infrastructure. During 2004 we hope to break ground on the long awaited new medians along El Cajon Blvd from 73rd to 54th streets. Crossroads is helping to make it happen.



We held several neighborhood cleanups and numerous tree plantings. In total we planted 250 trees in 2003 and plan to continue our efforts in 2004. It was about this time last year when there was much hoopla surrounding the Super Bowl. What didn't receive nearly as much attention



was the wonderful gift the National Football League gave to four deserving homeowners in District Seven. The NFL and volunteers remodeled these Fox Canyon homes inside and out. It was a great way to start the New Year in 2003. And speaking of Fox Canyon, that community will soon see a new neighborhood park get underway. Working with Councilmembers Toni Atkins and Charles Lewis, we have identified a location and initial funding to get this long awaited park started.

## City-Wide Issues

Probably the single biggest issue last year was the indictment of three City Councilmembers. It will take time to complete the judicial process. It is easy to understand people becoming more cynical and apathetic as a result of what happened at City Hall. I fervently hope people won't allow themselves to sit back. Instead, I hope they see it as all the more reason for public involvement and to get involved.

## Chargers

The Chargers situation has no easy answer with many people torn between wanting to keep the team and canceling the ticket guarantee while spending no

more tax dollars on professional sports. Until a compromise can be reached (and the only kind I will support does not involve spending our limited tax dollars), this issue will continue winding its way through the court system. Stay tuned, more to come on this in the months ahead I'm sure.

## Pension

The City's Pension fund also came under fire last year due to the under funding problems and the poorly performing stock market. The pension fund is down over \$1 billion dollars. But at the same time, over \$900 million of that deficit is due to the lower valued stock market and in time, those funds will recover. That still does not explain away the \$100 million in shortfalls due to Council budget actions in under funding the pension for the last 8 years. Tough decisions need to be made and we will soon hear an interim report from the Pension Reform Commission as we embark on a long-term plan to return and maintain the pension fund as a stable and again trusted asset.

## Budget

The City's budget has also been under fire with demands for services far outpacing revenues. This last year just as one example, the City saw its Workers Compensation insurance skyrocket overnight by over \$12 million. These type of increases, when joined by huge cutbacks from the state have made the fiscal situation in Cities and Counties throughout the state most perilous. Just as a brief example, when the state decided for 3 months to not send to San Diego budgeted revenue from the vehicle license fees, the City took a hit of \$4.2 million per month - for a total in excess of \$12 million - these are dollars our police, fire and public safety services were counting on and the money never showed up. It gets worse.

It has always been a goal of mine to make sure that local tax money stays local. Since 1994 alone, our City has lost to the State of California over \$330 million in revenues that had previously been dedicated to San Diego but have been taken away due to the State balancing their budget on the back of the City of San Diego. This has been a chief culprit in our deteriorated fiscal condition. The Governor's proposed FY05 budget is even worse, adding yet another \$20 million in losses back to the state. Already the City of San Diego receives only 17 cents from every property tax dollar paid, the rest going to Sacramento to be spent on things other than police, fire and public safety. A State constitutional amendment called the [Local Taxpayers and Public Safety Protection Act](#) that protects local governments from further raids by the State without voter approval is extremely important for the November 2004 election, as is the TransNet extension measure that will also be on the November ballot for our local roads, highways and transit. I'll have more about the importance of TransNet and the Local Taxpayers Protection Act in future eNewsletters.

And speaking of ballot measures, the TOT ballot measure on the San Diego City March 2004 election is extremely important for passage, as it will add desperately needed funds in a dedicated manner to public safety and libraries.

## Libraries



Building a library system for the City of San Diego is something that is near and dear to my heart. Working with the Mayor and community leaders, our library system is now becoming a reality. A main library and a state of the art system of 34 branches that utilizes today's technology is something that will not only make us proud but will be an invaluable resource to our citizenry for at least the next century. Finally, we have a program that invests back into our neighborhoods with wonderful libraries. I've been encouraged by the \$20 million state grant we received last year for the new main library and the \$5.35 million grant we received for the Logan Heights Library. That is in addition to private donations we are seeking as well as another state grant. In 2004, we will witness the ground-breaking of 4 new branch libraries in our communities along with the long awaited main library.

No wonder the year flew by. From the start it was a busy year and we worked on many projects and issues. From issues at City Council to accomplishments in the communities of District 7, it was fast-paced and the momentum continues. I look forward to keeping you updated in 2004 with our eNewsletter.

Lastly, I should mention the ongoing audit/investigation of the San Diego Data Processing Corporation (SDDPC) has certainly generated questions. In an effort to answer some of these questions, I have provided details on my website in an effort to provide factual information. [You can visit the DPC section on my website by clicking here.](#)

Thanks for being on the list and for [contacting me](#) with your thoughts and ideas. I always welcome hearing from you.

**Wishing you all the best in 2004.**

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## Past issues of our eNewsletter are available

Keep up to date with the many things going on in and around our neighborhoods. [Click on this link if you'd like to look back at a past issue of my eNewsletter.](#)

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